

# What Does Our Suffering Produce

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the idea that every moment of pain and suffering a believer endures is producing a unique glory for them, even if it may seem meaningless or unbearable at the time. It challenges the notion that suffering is without purpose and encourages faith in the unseen promises of God, drawing from the example of John the Baptist's tragic end to illustrate the concept of enduring afflictions for a greater eternal weight of glory.*

**Duration:** 6:57

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Matthew 11:11, Matthew 14:1, Romans 8:18

**Topics:** "Purpose in Suffering", "Eternal Glory"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Our light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight. It doesn't say we'll be followed by an eternal weight of glory. That would be good enough.

That would be good enough. That's not what it says. Kat ergadzomai, forgive the Greek, I just love it, gotta like dump it out every now and then.

You don't need to know that. The word means produce, prepare, cause to bring about. I'll venture this.

Every millisecond of your pain from the fallen nature or fallen man, every millisecond of your misery in the path of obedience is producing a peculiar glory you will get because of that. That's a very controversial statement, and I believe it. So that if anybody says to me that a believer's suffering was meaningless, I'll be quiet probably because they're probably hurting really bad right now and I'm gonna wait and see when the right time is.

But I'm gonna come back eventually and say it wasn't meaningless. I don't care if it was cancer or criticism. I don't care if it was slander or sickness.

It wasn't meaningless because verse 17 says, my light, momentary, lifelong, total affliction is doing something. It's doing something. It's not meaningless.

Of course you can't see what it's doing. This is the main unseen thing. Verse 18's talking about, I think.

What's the unseen you're supposed to look at? You're supposed to look at the promise of God in verse 17 that says your pain is doing something for you. You can't see it. You can't feel it.

Either you see it with the eyes of faith, believe it because the text says it, or you lose heart. And I'm gonna close with John the Baptist as an illustration. I love and groan.

My name's John. I love all the Johns in the world. That's a weird thing to say in the city.

If I were good enough, I would. But I love John the Baptist, and I love his story, and I weep over the way it ended. So let me just take three minutes and tell you the way it ended, and we'll stop.

He's in prison, and you know why he's in prison. Jesus said, there is no man born of woman greater than John the Baptist. Jesus said that.

He's in prison. You know why he's in prison? Because he looked the king right in the face and said, you can't have her. She is Philip's wife.

You're an adulterer. Well that's a very dangerous thing to say to a king who has absolute authority over anybody to do anything he wants. So he puts him in jail.

He's scared of him, so he hasn't killed him. But there he sits, and now it's Herod's birthday, and he gives a party for himself. Throws in a little bonus, a little sexual bonus for his guests.

Has his stepdaughter dance, really, really pleasing dance. Turns everybody on. They're all loving it.

And when she's done, he knows she's pleased the guests, so to reward her, he says, I give you whatever you want, up to half my kingdom. She goes to her mom, Herodias, who hates John the Baptist, and says, what should I ask for? And her mom says, ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. She walks back in.

Everybody's listening. What's she going to ask for? I want, right now, the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Silence in the room.

King can't take it back. He whispers to his attendant, get it. John's sitting there in the cell, wondering how the kingdom is going to come.

And the door opens, and two guys are standing there, one with a sword. There's this moment of silence, doesn't know what's going on. And the one with the sword says, come over here and kneel down, and if you struggle, we'll bind you.

And John says, what, what, what happened, what, what's going on? And the executioner says, King's daughter danced in the party, and she asked for your head, and we've come to get it. We're going to take your head. That's the last thing he has to think about in the next 20 seconds.

What would you think? Everything in me says, God, what can be more meaningless than a party where a girl dances, asks for the greatest man on the planet's head, and within two verses of the Bible, he's dead.

God, God. Meaningless.

Absolutely meaningless way to die. Nothing glorious about it. It stinks to high heaven.

I'll tell you, I hope God, in his mercy, put into John's head in those 20 seconds, this light momentary affliction is working for you an eternal way to glory. And so, I believe the main reason for not losing heart in this text is that none of your suffering is meaningless.

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